

PRESS RELEASE



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART EXHIBITS 1982 ACQUISITIONS
January 5 - February 6, 1983

In 1982 The Cleveland Museum of Art added 170 works of art to its collections, which are devoted to arts of all cultures and times and are notable for their exceptional range and quality. These new works are gathered for display in the annual Year in Review exhibition, which calls public attention to them for the first time. Many important new works are of genres little known in this country and difficult to obtain, and, like the collections they join, chosen with recognized independence and connoisseurship.

A major discovery in the field of baroque art is Rape of the Sabines by Johann Heinrich Schönfeld (1609-82), who studied in southern Germany but spent most of his career in Rome and Naples. Schönfeld's importance as a leading baroque artist has only recently been acknowledged as paintings like this one, often found under false attributions, are restored to his name. Though his work is well-represented in European museums, this is the first major painting by him to enter a museum in the United States. The Virgin in Glory with Saints by Giovanni Battista Pittoni (1687-1767) is another re-discovery, a freshly colored altarpiece that is one of the Venetian rococo painter's crowning achievements.

A sumptuous vase by the last great Attic vase painter is also a rare find. Elegant drawings echoing the style of Parthenon sculpture decorate this red-figure lekythos (oil flask), one of the less than a dozen intact works by the Meidias Painter surviving from the late fifth century BC.

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2-year in review

A lively miniature painting, A Demon in Chains, comes to the Islamic collection from an unusual series of late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century Persian paintings which imaginatively blend Turkish, Far Eastern, and Iranian styles. This expressive work is one of only five from the series now outside of Istanbul.

Notable in quality and number are more than twenty works of Indian and Southeast Asian art, principally medieval sculptures purchased from the important Pan-Asian collection formed by the late Christian Humann. Among them are a voluptuous stone sculpture of Lovers from eleventh-century India, an elegant Nepalese bronze figure of Goddess Umā of the same period, and a commanding stone monkey god, Hanuman, which once guarded the entry to a tenth-century Cambodian temple and now is a part of Cleveland's Southeast Asian collection, the finest in the United States.

The Museum's collections of Korean art and of Japanese tea-taste ceramics are also among the most important in the Western world; each was enhanced in 1982. A thirteenth-century representation of the historical Buddha is one of the few early Korean Buddhist paintings to survive, and a pale yellow Seto ware bowl of the Momoyama period is an intact example of this rare Japanese stoneware. Works by Rosanjin (1883-1959) and two other distinguished contemporary potters testify to the continuing vitality of the Japanese ceramic tradition.

One of the prominent acquisitions in Chinese art is Willow and Magpie, an evocative ink painting attributed to Mu-ch'i, the most eminent monk-painter of the Ch'an (Zen) Buddhist sect. The Museum now owns four paintings by this thirteenth-century artist, whose few surviving works are preserved primarily in Japanese temples. Three hanging scrolls from the same period depict the bamboo plant, a subject on which Chinese painters have traditionally lavished their calligraphic virtuosity.

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3-year in review

British painting predominates among the modern acquisitions. A haunting, disintegrating Head by contemporary artist Francis Bacon (b. 1909) is the first of his paintings to enter the collection. Easter Monday, H       Daurment by Walter Sickert (1860-1942) and Portrait of Sylvia Gosse by Harold Gilman (1876-1919) are welcome additions by two leading British disseminators of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism.

Objects of high artistry also joined the collection. A Corpus Christi attributed to Severo da Ravenna (active ca. 1500-43) exemplifies the technical mastery of detailed modeling as well as the spirit of Christian humanism characteristic of the Paduan circle of Renaissance sculptors. The skills of seventeenth-century artists are manifest in a variety of objects, most notably in a finely carved boxwood Figure of a Woman by the German sculptor Leonhard Kern (1588-1662).

The exhibition also features textiles and prints and drawings which, because of their fragility, will not be on permanent display. Nearly sixty fine pieces of ancient cloth enrich the Museum's already outstanding holdings, particularly of Coptic, Arabic, and Persian textiles. The acquisitions range from fragments of only a few inches to a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century Spanish curtain of about 126 square feet which is the only known intact silk of its size from medieval Europe or the Muslim world. Extremely rare woven inscriptions giving place and date of origin make a silk fragment and a tunic (a gift from The Junior Council of The Cleveland Museum of Art) the only identified surviving products of the Medieval silk-weaving centers of what is now Iraq.

The most significant addition to the Department of Prints and Drawings is a fluid and gracefully executed Landscape with Figures by Claude Lorrain (1600-82). The drawing comes from an album of some of the French master's finest drawings,

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4-year in review

probably assembled shortly after his death. Leona Prasse, retired curator of prints and drawings, presented two monotypes, along with a watercolor and an oil painting, by American artist Maurice Prendergast (1859-1924). The Print Club of Cleveland has given three extremely rare, early prints: The Great Flood of 1624 by Esaias van de Velde (Dutch, ca. 1590/1-1630), The Lamentation by Giuseppe Scolori (Italian, fl. 1592-1607), and (in honor of Sherman E. Lee, who retires as Director July 1, 1983) Man Smoking a Pipe with a Young Boy by Michael Sweerts (Dutch, 1624-1664). A Wooded Landscape by van de Velde--a "cabinet picture" executed on an intimate scale for a scholar's study--also entered the paintings collection in 1982.

The January Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art, which contains a complete listing of the 1982 acquisitions, serves as the catalogue of the Year in Review exhibition. Free gallery talks on the exhibition will take place on Wednesday, January 5, and Sunday, January 9, at 1:30 pm.

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For additional information or photographs, please contact the Public Information Office, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; 216/421-7340.